

MYTH: CARBOHYDRATES ARE UNHEALTHY



REALITY: CARBOHYDRATES ARE YOUR MAIN SOURCE OF ENERGY

Thinking about cutting carbs to lose weight? You might want to think again! With all the hype about going “low carb,” (Keto diet, we’re looking at you), there’s no wonder many people believe that carbohydrates are “bad.” But, carbohydrates are an important part of a healthy diet. They are the fuel your body runs on, which is why your brain might feel fuzzy if you don’t eat enough of them. Here are some tips on incorporating carbohydrates in a healthy way:

- **Not all carbs are created equal** – Highly processed carbohydrates, such as snack cakes, cookies, candy, etc., may taste good, but they have been stripped of fiber, vitamins, and minerals and are easy to overindulge in. Reserve these for “treats” every once in a while, and reach for more “whole” grains on a daily basis. Whole grains such as whole wheat bread, brown rice, and quinoa are packed with essential nutrients and make you feel full faster and longer. Try starting your day with some old fashioned oatmeal sweetened with fruit and topped with nuts.
- **Variety is key** – Fruits, vegetables, and beans are great sources

of carbohydrates that are rich in fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Be sure to keep these foods on hand and get creative with incorporating them into your diet. Baked apples with a sprinkle of cinnamon can help satisfy a sweet tooth; carrot sticks with low fat dip or celery sticks with a tablespoon of peanut butter can help keep you full between meals; and beans can be added to many recipes or used as a dip, such as hummus.

- **Rethink your drink** – beverages sweetened with sugar, such as soda, tea, lemonade, sports drinks, etc., can pack hundreds of extra calories into what you consume each day. Since sugar-sweetened beverages don’t fill us up or help keep us full between meals, it’s easy to forget to monitor our intake. Try drinking water throughout the day to stay hydrated and avoid excess calories. If switching to water sounds like a challenge, remember you don’t have to go “cold turkey.” Try starting small by replacing every-other beverage with a glass of water and slowly increasing from there. You can also infuse your water with fruit to add some flavor without all the extra calories.

INCLUSION TIPS: A helpful way to manage your carb intake is by using the MyPlate diagram. MyPlate is a great tool and visual to use when learning how to design your plate. Keep in mind that *My Plate* is a general guideline that may or may not be applicable to individuals with certain types of disabilities. Ask a friend or support person to help with measuring serving sizes if you need assistance.

nchpad.org/1351/6168/Good~Carbs~and~Bad~Carbs

nchpad.org/1365/6183/Tips-for~Eating-Out~~Low~Carb

nchpad.org/1362/6180/Low-Carb-Diet~~Maintenance~Tips

nchpad.org/1352/6169/Getting-Past-Nutrition-Barriers

FAMILY MATTERS: Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. But, many packaged breakfast foods such as toaster pastries, cereals, cereal bars, muffins, etc. can be loaded with sugar. Choosing healthier options doesn’t have to be complicated. Try spreading a tablespoon of peanut butter on a

piece of whole wheat toast or hard boiling eggs ahead of time that can be grabbed from the refrigerator. Apples and bananas or pre-portioned grapes are also easy to eat on-the-go as you rush out the door to start the day. Your family will feel full longer and have an easier time concentrating in school and at work!

LINKS:

Busting the Top 10 Carb Myths: todaysdietitian.com/newarchives/0416p30.shtml

Grains Group Food Gallery: choosemyplate.gov/grains-group-food-gallery

Healthy Recipes: Brown Rice 5 Ways: choosemyplate-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tentips/2016-BrownRice5WaysInfographic.pdf